

American
Center for Policy

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:
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****MEDIA ADVISORY****

**Reform in the Arab World: Democracy on the Move in Morocco &
Why There's "No Turning Back"**

Morocco's Foreign Minister to Hold US Press Conference on How Morocco is Embracing Reform to Promote Stability, Security, & Democracy in the Region

Washington, DC (March 17, 2011)— Next week, **His Excellency, Taleb Fassi-Fihri, Minister of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation for the Kingdom of Morocco**, is visiting Washington, DC to meet with Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton and other senior US Administration officials to discuss the recent wave of unrest in North Africa and the Middle East and how Morocco's decision to accelerate its reforms can promote stability, security, and democracy in the region.

The Press Conference will be held
on
Wednesday, March 23, 2011 at 12:30pm
at
The National Press Club
529 14th St. NW, 13th Floor, Murrow Room
Washington DC

You must RSVP by **Tuesday, March 22** to
cdark@moroccanamericancenter.com or (202) 309-0372

Proper credentials will be required for entry into press conference.

For more information or additional press availability for Minister Fassi-Fihri, please contact
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On March 9, His Majesty King Mohammed VI announced a comprehensive set of constitutional reforms to advance and broaden the democratic reforms that have been underway in Morocco for more than two decades. The new proposals, which received praise from the United States and many in the international community, will strengthen Morocco's elected government, ensure the independence of the judiciary, and further empower local communities and regions.

For the latest updates and information, you can also follow the
Moroccan American Center for Policy on Twitter - [# ##](http://twitter.com/MorAmCntrPol)

The Moroccan American Center for Policy (MACP) is a non-profit organization whose principal mission is to inform opinion makers, government officials and interested publics in the United States about political and social developments in Morocco and the role being played by the Kingdom of Morocco in broader strategic developments in North Africa, the Mediterranean, and the Middle East. For more, please visit www.moroccanamericanpolicy.org

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

Monday, March 14, 2011

US Senate, House leaders praise Morocco King's "Pro-Democracy Approach," Call on US to be "Vigilant & Tireless" in Supporting Moroccan Reforms

Washington, DC (March 14, 2011)— Following His Majesty King Mohammed VI's historic speech last week proposing far-reaching Constitutional reforms, US Senate and House leaders voiced strong, unequivocal support for the King's leadership and the Moroccan people's aspirations to strengthen democracy in the country.

"I congratulate the King of Morocco for making such a positive step towards democracy by decentralizing his government, giving more power to the people, so they are accountable and so they are able to have the power," said Rep. Ileana Ros-Lehtinen (FL) Chairwoman of the House Foreign Relations Committee. Rep. Ros-Lehtinen commended His Majesty King Mohammed VI's "very forward, pro-democracy, pro-accountability" approach to initiating reforms.

Sen. John McCain (AZ), who visited Morocco in February, called the King's speech "impressive" and praised His Majesty's "long-standing commitment to lead Morocco to a future of reform and modernization." Sen. McCain also called Morocco a "positive example to governments across the Middle East and North Africa" and urged the US "be vigilant and tireless in our support for the government and people of Morocco in transforming the King's vision of reform into a reality that improves the lives of all Moroccans."

Sen. Joe Lieberman (CT) hailed the King's speech as "a hopeful step in the right direction to address the legitimate demands and aspirations of the Moroccan people." He noted that the measures put forward by the King will undoubtedly "strengthen human rights in Morocco."

Praise also came from Rep. Mario Diaz-Balart (FL), who called His Majesty King Mohammed VI "an example to follow" and a leader who "really understands how to move forward." Rep. Steve Cohen (TN), called Morocco a "rock" in the region and noted that the country's track record of reforms safeguarded Morocco from the "same problems as Egypt or Libya." Rep. Ann Marie Buerkle (NY) also commended the King's commitment to enshrine women's equality in the constitution, calling it "the right thing to do in order to make the country stronger."

On March 9, His Majesty King Mohammed VI announced a comprehensive set of constitutional reforms and a far-reaching regionalization initiative to advance and broaden the democratic reforms that have been underway in the country for more than two decades. The new proposals will strengthen Morocco's elected government, ensure the independence of the judiciary, and further empower local communities and regions.

This week, Morocco launched a website, <http://www.reforme.ma/>, to gather input from Moroccans on the proposed constitutional reform, and their ideas will be presented to the Advisory Committee charged by His Majesty the King to oversee the process.

"It is the Moroccan people who will have the last word," said His Majesty King Mohammed VI in last week's speech. "They shall express their will through a free, fair referendum."

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

Tuesday, March 1, 2011

US Under Sec. of State says US-Morocco partnership 'more important' than ever, reiterates support for Western Sahara autonomy plan, cites Moroccan reforms

Washington, DC (March 1)—Calling Morocco "a model of economic, social, and political reform," William J. Burns, Under Secretary for Political Affairs for the US State Department, met with Morocco's Foreign Minister Taib Fassi Fihri in Rabat Sunday, where he underscored the importance of US-Morocco relations in the current regional unrest, and reaffirmed US backing of Morocco's autonomy plan to resolve the Western Sahara dispute.

"The partnership between the United States, Morocco and the Moroccan people is a very high priority for President Obama and Secretary Clinton," said Burns at a joint press briefing with Fassi Fihri in Rabat. "It's never been more important than at this moment."

Burns reiterated US support for Morocco's compromise solution to resolve the decades-long Western Sahara conflict: "The United States continues to believe that the Moroccan autonomy proposal is a serious and credible plan," he stated at the joint press briefing, reported the *Maghreb Arab Press*.

"This is a moment of profound change across the region. People are continuing to seek freedom and dignity and opportunity," said Burns. "Pursuit of those aspirations will take different shapes in different societies," he said. "In Morocco, there is a strong record of efforts under the leadership of King Mohammed VI to open up opportunities." Morocco "continues to face many challenges," but "it's been a model" of reforms. "Civil society organizations have grown rapidly and there is a will to continue down the path of reform and modernization."

Fassi Fihri shared Burns assessment of the importance of Rabat-Washington relations and Morocco's concern with regional events. He said Morocco was closely following international efforts to address the situation in Libya and is concerned about reports of the use of foreign forces in Libya.

"The United States will continue to do everything that we can" to support Morocco's ongoing reforms and modernization, said Burns, "in the spirit of our partnership through the Millennium Challenge Account, through energetic efforts to expand trade and investment opportunities, including a major American trade mission that intends to come to Morocco in the coming months."

"Morocco continues to demonstrate its commitment to openness and show that reforms, not repression, are the answer for advancing the rights of its citizens and stability of its civil society," said Robert Holley, executive director, Moroccan American Center for Policy. "That difference makes Morocco a valuable partner for the US, and an important player in the region. Morocco deserves America's support, in actions as well as words, to resolve the Western Sahara impasse, which continues to be a source of instability in North Africa."

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